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| **Here are a few of the laws  in the Twelve Tables  (**These have been reworded)   1. If you are called to go to court, you must go. If you don’t show up, you can be taken to court by force. 2. If you need a witness to testify and he will not show up, you can go once every three days and shout in front of his house. 3. Should a tree on a neighbor's farm be bend crooked by the wind and lean over your farm, you may take legal action for removal of that tree. 4. If it's your tree, it’s your fruit, even if it falls on another man’s land. 5. A person who had been found guilty of giving false witness shall be hurled down from the Tarpeian Rock. 6. No person shall hold meetings by night in the city. 7. A dead man shall not be buried or burned within the city. 8. Marriages should not take place between [**plebeians and patricians.**](http://rome.mrdonn.org/plebs.html)(As time went on, this law was changed. When the tables were first written, this was the law.) |
| **After a 16-year battle with their last king,** [**Tarquin the Proud**](http://rome.mrdonn.org/horatius.html)**, the people of Rome vowed never to be ruled by a king again. The people wanted to be ruled by elected leaders. They wanted to vote on any laws suggested. They wanted to vote on who would rule over them each year.**  **In 509 BCE, over 2500 years ago, the citizens of Rome created a new government. They called it THE ROMAN REPUBLIC.**  **Although many things changed, and much improved, women, children and slaves were still not citizens of Rome. They had no voice in government. Only adult free Roman men were citizens.**  **But, things did improve under the Republic. About 50 years after the Roman Republic was formed, the leaders of the Republic wrote down many of the old laws, to make sure everyone understood them. History refers to this group of laws as "The Twelve Tables" because the written laws were organized into 12 sections.**  **These laws talked about property, crime, family, theft, marriage and inheritance. It does not really matter what they said, although the laws did try to be fair. What matters is that these laws were written down. They were engraved on tablets of metal and put on display at the Forum in the city of Rome, so that everyone could see them.**  **Each law applied to every Roman citizen, be he rich or poor. That was a huge change for the better!** |